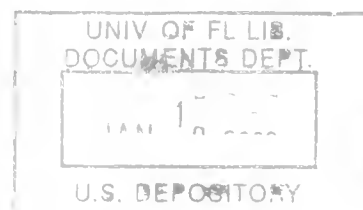


BUREAU OF INTERNATIONAL LABOR AFFAIRS



A Brief Outline of the Activities of the
Bureau of International Labor Affairs
of the U. S. Department of Labor



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The evolvement of labor and manpower factors as important components in the conduct of U. S. foreign policy has greatly increased the activities and operating programs of the United States Department of Labor in world affairs.

The Department's activities in the international field are directed by the Assistant Secretary of Labor for International Affairs, and are centered in the Bureau of International Labor Affairs (ILAB). The wealth of knowledge, resources and experience gained in a wide range of domestic labor and manpower activity supports the Department in its international activities and enables it to play a significant role in the planning, development and execution of broad foreign labor policies for the U. S. Government.

The responsibilities of the Labor Department in the international field are in seven major areas:

- * International Labor Policy Development
- * International Technical Assistance
- * Foreign Economic Policy Development and Trade Negotiation
- * Participation in Intergovernmental Organizations
- * Participation in Administration of the Foreign Service
- * Cultural and Informational Programs
- * Research

International Labor Policy Development

Manpower utilization and labor institutions are among the key elements influencing the political, economic and social developments of nations. They can be particularly important forces in fostering sound economic development and growth of democratic principles among the less-developed countries. The Department of Labor, by virtue of its responsibilities and its immersion in manpower and labor activities, provides the link between the interests of American wage-earners and institutions concerned with labor and the foreign policy interests of the U. S.

Primarily through a small group of "area" and international trade union specialists in ILAB, the Department of Labor follows labor developments abroad and brings to bear the resources and technical knowledge of the entire Department relevant to U. S. international activities in the labor and manpower fields.

This group maintains contact with foreign labor attaches in the U. S. and with U. S. and international trade union officials, and provides the focal point within the Department for serving, assigning and evaluating U. S. labor attaches stationed abroad.

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To develop and gain international acceptance of enforceable fair labor standards for goods moving in international trade.

Within the framework of a U. S. policy, which looks towards a continuing expansion of world trade, a crucial issue is the effects of expanded imports and exports on domestic employment and the utilization of manpower resources. That increased exports mean more jobs is comparatively easy to demonstrate. The relationship between jobs and competitive imports is a far more complex problem. In some instances such imports may increase jobs, or bring about a more rational distribution of manpower resources. In some instances, imports may cause dislocation of workers in industries particularly vulnerable to import competition.

Within the U. S. Government interagency structure which deals with trade policy and its execution, the Labor Department has the responsibility for contributing information and guidance on labor and manpower effects. The resources of all the technical and operating Bureaus are brought into the operation and coordinated by ILAB.

Participation in Intergovernmental Organizations

Generally speaking, most international organizations have a direct or indirect effect on labor and business abroad through policies adopted and influence exerted in the development of emerging nations. This, in turn, has many implications on the U. S. domestic scene.

The Department of Labor plays a major role in two international organizations, in particular: the International Labor Organization (ILO) and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

The ILO is a tripartite intergovernmental organization, an agency of the United Nations, with 118 member countries at the beginning of 1967. Tripartite delegations to the ILO from member countries include representatives of the workers and the employers as well as the government. Founded in 1919 on the concept that "lasting peace can be established only if it is based on social justice", the objective of the ILO is improvement of living and working conditions throughout the world.

The Assistant Secretary of Labor for International Affairs heads the U. S. delegation to the annual ILO Conference at Geneva, Switzerland, and serves as U. S. delegate on the ILO Governing Body.

The OECD is an outgrowth of the old Marshall Plan and was reorganized on its current structure in 1961 to provide 20 Western industrialized nations, plus Japan, with an instrument to aid in increasing economic growth and employment, to aid in raising standards of living, and to help expand world trade for the less-developed countries and industrialized countries, alike.

The Department of Labor handles all U. S. participation in the manpower and social policy matters of the OECD, and provides the U. S. delegate to the Organization's Manpower and Social Affairs Committee. The Department also assists the President's Council of Economic Advisors in its work with the OECD's Economic Policy Committee.

The Department has also been increasingly involved with the United Nations, and a number of its subordinate organizations in addition to the ILO. The UN's Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), which is concerned with coordinating the work of the various UN specialized agencies and regional commissions, usually has an ILAB staff member on the U. S. Delegation to its meetings. The Department of State asks Department of Labor assistance in providing position papers (and occasionally staff members to act as advisers to U. S. Delegations) to meetings of some of the UN's regional commissions.

Participation in Administration of the Foreign Service

The Assistant Secretary for International Affairs is a member of the Board of the Foreign Service as provided in the Foreign Service Act of 1946 as well as current executive orders. The Department of Labor participates in the overall administration of the Foreign Service and is represented on the Board of Examiners, the Junior Officer Selection Board, and the annual Foreign Service selection board exercise.

The Department participates in decisions on assignments, transfers, reassignments and career development of labor officers in the Foreign Service and works with State on assignments of other Foreign Service officers for part-time labor work.

Also, the Department participates in recruitment, examination, orientation and training of Foreign Service officers and helps keep them supplied with pertinent information on the U. S. labor scene.

Cultural and Information Programs

The Labor Department participates in cultural exchange programs through the Department of State for the purpose of improving understanding abroad of the U. S. worker's role in society, and to provide foreign trade union, government, and other leaders and specialists the opportunity to make on-site studies of the people and institutions of this country.

Through international exhibits, the Department tells the story of the American worker, his way of life, his standard of living, the freedoms he enjoys. Frequently U. S. trade unionists participate in the exhibits. Each year exhibits are staged in Eastern European countries where seminars dealing with subjects such as work safety are sometimes conducted by Department personnel.

In keeping the labor officers of U. S. foreign affairs agencies appraised of developments in the U. S. and international labor fields, as well as others interested in international labor matters, the Department publishes directories of international trade union organizations, material on world labor, trade union and economic matters, and a bi-monthly magazine, International Labor, dealing with Department programs and general activities in the international labor field.

Research

The Department of Labor engages in general research in international trade union activities and specific research into economic and labor conditions abroad. This work is performed in the Office of Foreign Labor and Trade of the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

International statistical comparisons are done on unemployment rates in the U. S. and abroad, job vacancy statistics in selected foreign countries, trends in unit labor costs in manufacturing in the U. S. and other major industrialized countries, trends in wholesale and consumer prices in a number of countries, man-days lost through strikes at home and abroad, and the extent of poverty in the U. S. and four highly industrialized West European countries.

Monographs are published on labor law and practice in various countries around the world, labor digests on various countries and regions, and reports on labor in selected countries such as Brazil, Chile, Indonesia, etc.

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